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National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID)

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Why is in news? States should have a uniform policy on law and order: Union Minister of Home Affairs

Home Minister calls for **centralisation of data on terror and other crimes**; each State to have a National Investigation Agency office by 2024 with powers to confiscate property in terror cases.

It is an **attached office of the Ministry of Home Affairs** that has been created as an IT platform to assist the intelligence and law enforcement agencies in ensuring national and internal security, with the **ultimate aim of counter-terror**.

The **26/11 terrorist siege in Mumbai back in 2008** exposed the deficiency that security agencies had no mechanism to look for vital information on a real-time basis.

NATGRID is an **intelligence sharing network** that **collates data from the standalone databases of the various agencies and ministries of the Indian government**.

It is a **counter terrorism measure** that collects and collates a host of information from government databases including tax and bank account details, credit/debit card transactions, visa and immigration records and itineraries of rail and air travel.

It will **also have access to the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems**, a database that links crime information, including First Information Reports, across 14,000 police stations in India.

It will be a medium for **11 Central agencies** such as the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) to **access data on a secured platform**. The data will be procured by NATGRID from 21 providing organisations such as the telecom, tax records, bank, immigration etc.

Criticisms:

NATGRID is facing opposition on charges of **possible violations of privacy and leakage of confidential personal information**.

Its **efficacy in preventing terror** has also been questioned given that **no state agency or police force has access to its database** thus reducing chances of immediate, effective action.

According to few experts, **digital databases** such as NATGRID **can be misused**. Over the last two decades, the very **digital tools that terrorists use have also become great weapons to fight the ideologies of violence**.

Intelligence agencies have also **opposed amid fears that it would impinge on their territory** and possibly result in leaks on the leads they were working on to other agencies.

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